

THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Literacy missions thriving in Mississippi

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Could you imagine teaching English as a second language to a Spanish-speaking group — and not be able to speak Spanish yourself? Not only is that possible, but English as a Second Language (ESL) is a ministry that is thriving in Mississippi, in addition to other areas of literacy ministry.

Paula Smith, consultant in the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), touts the viability of this innovative ministry. "Literacy missions is to give every person the opportunity to learn to read, write, or speak English and to learn the meaning of God's word," said Smith.

This ministry includes ESL; adult reading and writing, which is the traditional literacy work; and tutoring children and youth while teaching the gospel in the process. Another category is being added this year: chronological Bible storying, a tool for presenting the Gospel to anyone, anywhere, who may have never heard the gospel or doesn't have a Biblical background.

The Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering provides training for leaders. The North American Mission Board (NAMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention provides annual training for Mississippians wishing to be certified to teach people how to organize literacy ministries.

In the last two years, over 300 Mississippians have been trained. "Our goal is to have some kind of literacy ministry in every association in Mississippi," said Smith.

Smith admits she wasn't trained in this area, and while on furlough from missionary work in South America found herself at sheriff's departments, hospitals, even catfish farms with the request, "Can you please come help us?"

She began by dealing with a church in Belzoni and attempting to teach English the same way she learned Spanish. That approach "didn't get anywhere with those guys," she said. Smith found about the NAMB training, and after receiving certification, she went back to her group of 14 of Spanish-speaking men in Belzoni.



MISSIONS AT HOME — Christi Price (left), a member of First Church, Greenwood, works with children during Bible study at Nueva Vida y Esperanza in Sunflower. Price is one of many Mississippi Baptist Volunteers working in English as a second language ministries. The second worker at right is unidentified. (Special to the Baptist Record)

"Within a week 'they got it.'" Smith continued, saying, "To lead an ESL group it's actually better if you don't know the language, because you tend to use it as a crutch if you know it."

Success stories from Smith's ESL program include:

- Richard and Christi Price, a physician and his wife from Greenwood, have sensed a call to missions for some time. Christi coordinates and organizes four churches in Greenwood to conduct Sunday School for Hispanic children. She has also started three ESL groups in the area.

- Mary Sue Lewis, a member of Calvary Church, Waynesboro, attended a workshop for ESL. She began a group and during a recent fellowship, 30 Hispanics and 18

teachers and family members attended. All of this is in addition to ongoing ministries at the church.

- Debbie Blackledge of Sandersville, went to teach ESL in Thailand this past summer — at her own expense. She is now back in the United States, and while she didn't receive ESL training here she has caught the vision in a foreign country and wants to implement it here.

For more information concerning ESL and other literacy ministries sponsored by the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering, contact Smith at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3319 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 319. E-mail: psmith@mbcb.org.

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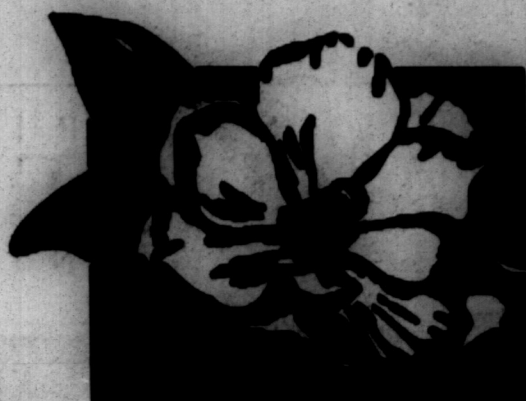
VOL. 127

No. 29

MARGAREY LACKEY

SPECIAL EDITION

STATE MISSIONS GOAL: \$1.5 MILLION



MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST STATE MISSIONS

Pastor Song sings new song

By Frank Lay
Correspondent

Nan Ho Song is a church planter with a song. He was well known as a Gospel singer and song writer in his native country of Korea. He often sang for churches and conferences in the Korean Baptist Convention and for Far Eastern Broadcasting radio programs.

From 1994-1996 he was in the United States to study music at the New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS). After earning the master of church music degree from NOBTS, he returned to Korea where he

served with the Korean Baptist Education Department and as minister of music in the Evergreen Church in Seoul.

As a musician, Song was in much demand in Korea. However, there was a restlessness in his life as well as a desire to preach the Gospel. Because of his popularity as a singer, he had very little opportunity to preach in Korea. He decided to return to the United States where, unknown as a musician, he might be able to serve a Korean Baptist church as pastor.

Little did he know that decision would lead him to become a church planter in Mississippi and help begin the Evergreen Korean Baptist Mission in the Metro Association, with assis-

tance from the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering.

Several years ago someone approached Jichul Doo, pastor of the Korean Mission on the Gulf Coast, about the need to begin a Korean congregation in metro Jackson.

First Church, Ridgeland, to be the mother church. Now Evergreen Mission has ten couples meeting on Sundays in the chapel provided by First Church, Ridgeland.

There have been 14 recent professions of faith. One person has already been baptized and six are awaiting baptism.

Many of those who attend Evergreen Mission have job-related responsibilities on the weekends, so Sunday attendance averages around 18 people. However, Korean Christians have been known as a people of prayer, so their largest atten-

dance is at the Wednesday evening prayer service which lasts nearly three hours.

On Sunday mornings, the mission meets for Bible Study. Worship service begins at 10 a.m. and is followed by a share time and fellowship meal. Meal time is very important for Koreans living in the United States because of the difficulty of finding Korean food. Song said, "We need to do this because some cannot get Korean food."

Nan Ho Song is getting to preach more these days, but he has not lost his song. He is using his musical talents as well as his preaching gifts to help plant a new church for Korean people living in Mississippi.

늘푸른침례교회

Evergreen Korean Baptist Mission

• 주일 예배: 10:00 AM

• Sunday School: 8:45 AM

• 수요일 성경 공부: 7:30 PM

• 금요일 저녁기도회: 9:00 PM

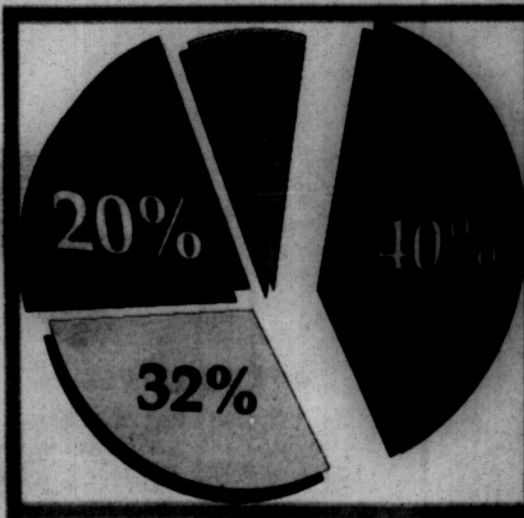
☎ (601) 956-7836

Song

Doo had prayed about the possibility for three years when he heard that Nan Ho Song was living in South Carolina. Doo contacted him about coming to the metro Jackson area to begin a Korean church.

For one month, Song and his wife Dong Sung Song, prayed about coming to Mississippi. Though he had no experience in church planting, they sensed that the Holy Spirit was leading them in that direction. Song said, "I'm sure God led us."

On the first Sunday of April 2002, the Evergreen Mission began meeting at First Church, Jackson, with three couples in attendance. Soon Metro Association asked

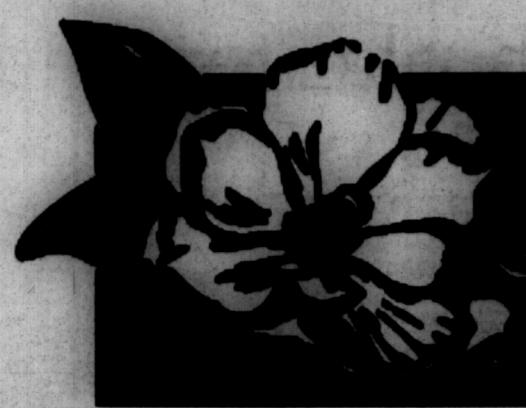


CHURCH	ASSOCIATION	AMOUNT
\$1,000,000 AND ABOVE		
FBC Jackson	METRO	\$ 4,006.11
Broadmoor	METRO	\$ 26,331.66
FBC Brandon	RANKIN	\$17,155.10
Michael Memorial	GULF COAST	\$15,357.72
FBC Clinton	METRO	\$13,185.35
Calvary	LEE	\$11,381.26
FBC Gulfport	GULF COAST	\$11,180.99
FBC Madison	METRO	\$11,021.67
FBC Natchez	ADAMS	\$10,294.93
\$500,000 - \$999,999		
FBC Crystal Springs	COPIAH	\$8,682.00
FBC Ellisville	JONES	\$5,394.00
FBC Purvis	LAMAR	\$4,905.00
FBC Amory	MONROE	\$4,269.90
Highland	WARREN	\$4,710.02
Tylertown	WALTHAM	\$4,637.61
FBC Philadelphia	NESHOBA	\$4,601.00
FBC West Point	GOLDEN TRIANGLE	\$4,431.29
FBC Eupora	WEBSTER	\$4,357.86
FBC New Albany	UNION CO	\$4,023.00
\$250,000 - \$499,999		
Bay Springs	JASPER	\$6,803.00
Prentiss	COV-JEFF DAVIS	\$6,647.30
New Salem	GOLDEN TRIANGLE	\$5,617.00
Liberty	MISSISSIPPI	\$5,522.16
New Hope	LAUDERDALE	\$5,347.71
Clarksdale	NORTH DELTA	\$4,502.00
FBC Morton	SCOTT	\$4,428.33
FBC Holly Springs	MARSHALL	\$3,781.42
FBC Union	NEWTON	\$3,520.00
Improve	MARION	\$3,338.33
\$150,000 - \$249,999		
Cato	RANKIN	\$3,434.00
Bethel	UNION CO	\$3,250.00
FBC Marion	LAUDERDALE	\$2,855.00
FBC Tunica	NORTH DELTA	\$2,978.00
Hurley	WEBSTER	\$2,648.44
Mantee	WEBSTER	\$2,602.01
Mt Moriah	LIBERTY	\$2,519.15
Friendship	LEE	\$2,475.00
Faith	METRO	\$2,400.00
Hebron	LAUDERDALE	\$2,400.00
\$100,000 - 149,000		
FBC Boyle	MID-DELTA	\$4,441.21
Crossview	RANKIN	\$3,444.49
Looxahoma	NORTHWEST	\$3,233.40
Shady Grove	COPIAH	\$3,215.91
Hebron	JONES	\$2,609.21
County Line	NESHOBA	\$2,401.55
FBC Bude	FRANKLIN	\$2,116.00
Beulah	NEWTON	\$2,090.00
Bethany	CALHOUN	\$1,938.00
Beulah	HUMPHREYS	\$1,786.06

The Margaret Lackey Club divides churches into ten regular Sunday offerings recorded on the Annual Church are listed based upon their gifts to the M

My Mississippi, M

Mississippi Baptist State Missions



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTIST
STATE MISSIONS

Mall talk leads to pastorate

By Frank Lay
Correspondent

Carlos Vega retired after spending 24 years in the U.S. Army, but for the past three or four years he has been serving in the Lord's army.

Carlos and his wife Lilibeth were Catholics until they moved to Tupelo. One day Lilibeth began speaking to another Hispanic lady in a local mall who invited them to attend a Hispanic mission in Tupelo. The mission was being funded by gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering.

When the Vegas first visited the small struggling mission, they were embarrassed because they did not know how to find anything in the Bible. Though they had attended church all their lives, they had no knowledge of the Bible. For a time, they continued attending both churches but soon developed a love for studying the Scriptures in the Baptist church.

David Alexander, who grew up as the son of missionaries in Mexico, was serving as pastor of Iglesia Hispanica at the time. David visited with the Vegas and asked them if they would like to invite Jesus Christ into their lives.

Carlos and Lilibeth prayed to receive Christ. Soon their daughter Cindy did the same. All three were baptized during the same service.

During the next several months, David spent much time discipling Carlos and encouraged him to develop a consistent

quiet time in the Lord. Carlos developed a hunger for Bible study and love for prayer. He often went jogging with David and would constantly ask questions. They met together each Monday to study the Scriptures and often went visiting together.

David continued serving the

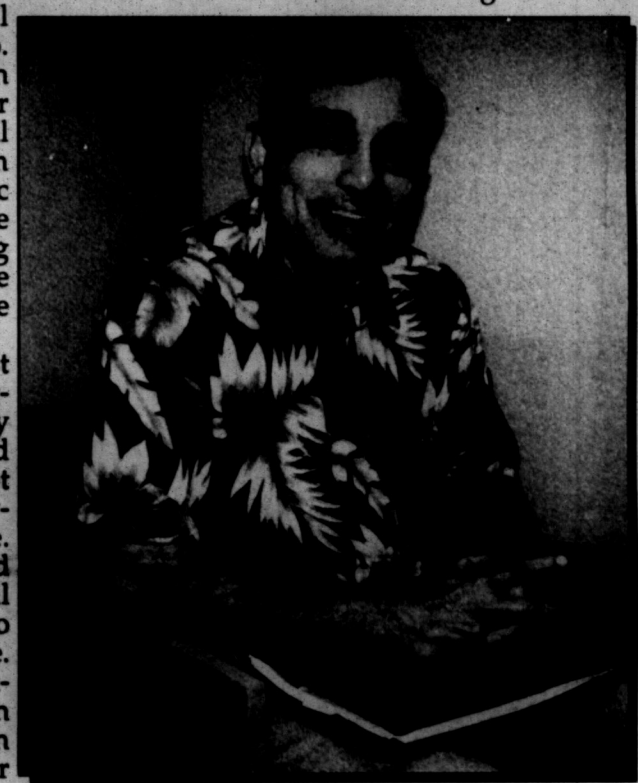
me to do, I will be a pastor for you." Then he added, "I have loved every minute of it."

Carlos Vega has served the Iglesia Hispanica for just over a year. The church seeks to reach the estimated 1000 Hispanics living in the Tupelo and Verona areas. In addition to Sunday worship services at First Church in Verona, Iglesia Hispanica conducts two home Bible study groups during the week.

On Mondays they meet in Tupelo and on Fridays in Verona. They recently began an English as Second Language (ESL) class at the Lee Association office building in Tupelo. Seven people have already received Christ through this class. Each Saturday Carlos drives to Golden, where he leads a Bible study. He hopes to reach enough people to begin another church. Four people there have already been converted and two others have expressed genuine interest.

Iglesia Hispanica has reached people with all kinds of pain and problems. Entire families have been saved and marriages have been restored. The church is becoming a caring community as the people have learned to pray and support each other. Vega said, "Burdens are lifted when they come to our church."

Iglesia Hispanica recently participated in Tupelo's first Hispanic "festival" in a local park. Their purpose was to minister to the Hispanic Community and hopefully reach more people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.



Vega

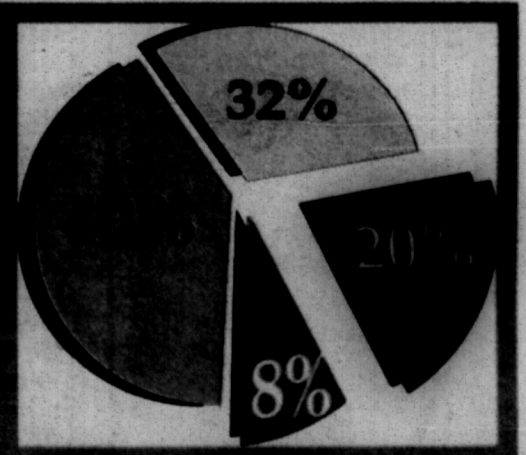
mission until he was invited to serve as a consultant in the church planting department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. David knew that he had to find someone to take his place as pastor of Iglesia Hispanica in Tupelo. The Lord put Carlos' name on his heart.

Confident that Carlos was the one to serve as pastor, Alexander approached him about the possibility. After much prayer, the Holy Spirit confirmed to Carlos that he should be the pastor. He said, "Lord, if that is what you want

CHURCH	ASSOCIATION	AMOUNT
\$75,000 - \$99,999		
Liberty	PONTOTOC	\$4,920.00
Scotland	MONTGOMERY	\$1,440.00
Shuqualak	NOXUEE	\$1,360.00
Liberty	CARROLL	\$1,354.00
FBC Galilee	MISSISSIPPI	\$1,200.00
Cruger	HOLMES	\$1,200.00
FBC Sumner	NORTH CENTRAL	\$1,200.00
Wayside	WARREN	\$1,080.49
Old Pearl Valley	NESHOBA	\$1,055.00
Georgetown	COPIAH	\$977.28
\$55,000 - \$74,999		
FBC Cleveland	MID-DELTA	\$2,614.75
Union	RANKIN	\$1,437.00
Fellowship	JASPER	\$1,320.00
Union	UNION	\$1,230.00
Oak Grove	CLARKE	\$1,122.94
New Hope	WEBSTER	\$1,108.00
Benton Baptist	YAZOO	\$1,080.00
Union Hall	LINCOLN	\$1,065.00
Mt Vernon	LEE	\$1,060.00
New Hope	GOLDEN TRIANGLE	\$1,023.30
\$40,000 - \$54,999		
Chalybeate	BENTON-TIPPAH	\$1,540.00
Friendship	PONTOTOC	\$1,535.70
Liberty	NEWTON	\$1,050.00
White Sand	PEARL RIVER	\$952.86
New Providence	CALHOUN	\$853.00
Spring Hill	NORTH CENTRAL	\$820.00
Cross Road	GULF COAST	\$792.00
Black Hawk	CARROLL	\$763.00
Mt Zion	NEW CHOCTAW	\$717.89
Cary	HARKEY-ISSAQ	\$705.00
\$25,000 - \$39,999		
Shiloh	UNION	\$1,495.00
Oak Grove	SCOTT	\$1,325.00
Pine Hill	CLARKE	\$756.00
Mt Vernon	WEBSTER	\$600.00
Pleasant Hill	UNION	\$570.00
Center Ridge	TEMPER	\$525.00
Rock Branch	NEWTON	\$520.00
Hermanville	UNION	\$506.00
Pilgrims Rest	WEBSTER	\$500.00
Parkview	PEARL RIVER	\$447.87
\$25,000 AND BELOW		
Bethany	MARSHALL	\$1,713.00
Corinth	LAKE	\$1,611.00
County Line	PONTOTOC	\$1,600.00
Pine Grove	NESHOBA	\$1,349.00
Bethesda	METRO	\$1,301.00
Bellevue/Shelby	MID-DELTA	\$1,200.00
Mt Olive	CHICKASAW	\$762.50
Holly Springs	MARION	\$680.00
Murphy Creek	WINSTON	\$647.00
Sturgis	GOLDEN TRIANGLE	\$551.27

into ten categories based upon the total amount of their Church Profile. Then the top ten churches in each category to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering.

My Mission Field



Church planter finds more work than time

By Frank Lay
Correspondent

Rocky Tzib, a native of Belize, is a man who is pulled in many different directions. As a church planter, he is serving Iglesia Bautista Cristo Vive in Pontotoc and helping begin the Hispanic Mission in Corinth.

Cristo Vive is sponsored by West Heights Church, Pontotoc, while Oakland Church, Corinth, sponsors the Hispanic Mission in Corinth. As a husband and father, Rocky must balance his time between two mission churches and his family.

Rocky has been in Pontotoc for a number of years and taught a struggling Sunday School class in Spanish. Then in 2000, West Heights Church decided to begin a Hispanic Mission and called Rocky to serve part-time as the mission's pastor.

According to Rocky, "they really got serious in Pontotoc." The mission was named Iglesia Bautista Cristo Vive (The Living Christ Baptist Church). The church has prayer meeting each Wednesday evening. Worship services are on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings, with Sunday School on Sundays.

Cristo Vive has outgrown the double-wide trailer and two additional rooms that have been provided for them. Up to 120

people attend the Sunday morning activities. The biggest problem is that there is little space to put the children. They desperately need another double wide or a metal

In 2001, Oakland Church invited Rocky to help them start the Hispanic Mission in Corinth. Rocky eats lunch at Pontotoc following the morning service at Cristo Vive, then drives to Alcorn County for a 4 p.m. Sunday School and 5:30 p.m. worship service. Thirty to forty usually attend the services in Corinth.

Oakland Church has provided a metal building for use by the Hispanic congregation. On Monday, they have an ESL (English as a Second Language) class with 40-48 in attendance. About 25 people have received Christ through the ESL class.

On Tuesday they have visitation, and then Rocky returns to Pontotoc.

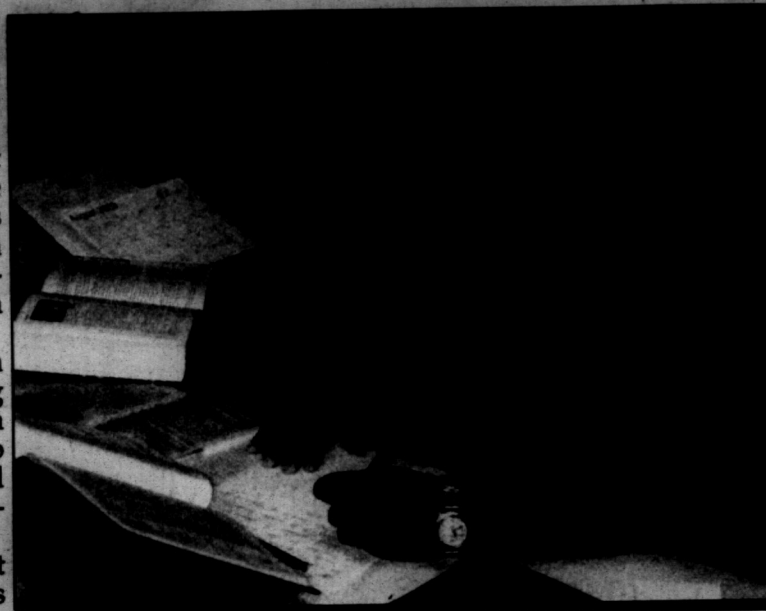
In addition to his work in Pontotoc and Corinth, Rocky teaches a Bible Study in Houston on Thursday evenings. He has been invited to begin a mission there but he recognizes the danger of being spread too thin. He has also been invited to begin another Bible Study in Amory but has no time left.

Friday is considered his day off, but he often uses the mornings to prepare his Bible studies and sermons. Friday afternoons and evenings are reserved for his wife Glenda and three-year-old son Rocky Jordan. Rocky is proud of the fact that his son is a U.S. citizen.

He hopes to train leaders at Cristo Vive and the Hispanic Mission so that they can strengthen the local work and begin other Hispanic churches in north Mississippi.

Mississippi Baptists can help in the beginning of new churches in Mississippi by their prayers and by giving to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering. New churches are needed to reach the more than 1,500,000 residents of Mississippi who are not members any church, especially in the receptive and rapidly-growing ethnic communities of the state.

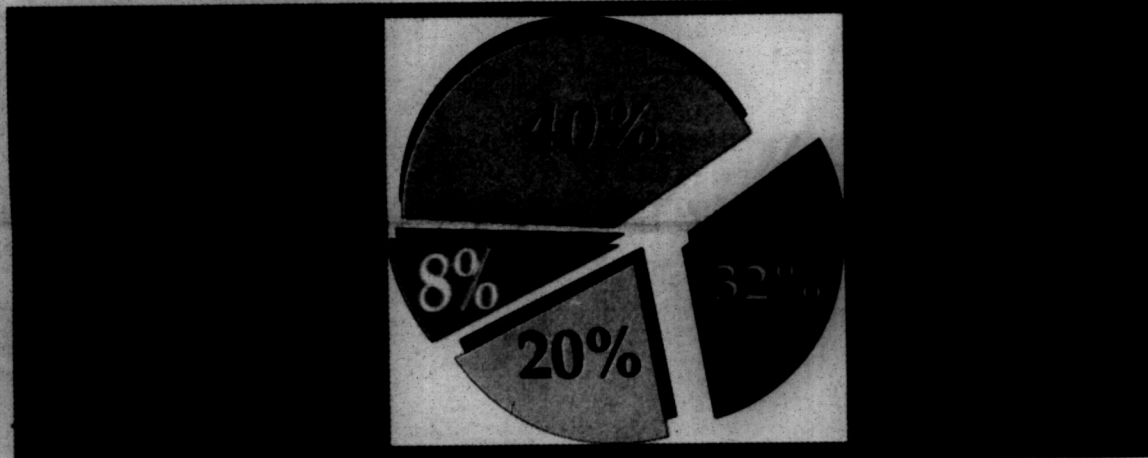
The Cooperative Program and the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions help to meet that need by supporting the planting of those new churches.



Tzib

building in order to provide for the growth they are experiencing. They would also like to build a playground for the children.

"Most every Sunday people get saved, many through the evangelistic outreach on Thursday evenings," Rocky said. Two people are awaiting baptism at Cristo Vive.



Summer missionary sees 'passion' in Canadians

By Drewe Llyn Jeffcoat
Correspondent

"I didn't know what to expect when I went to Canada," says Kelly Webb, member of Vaiden Church, recent graduate from Mississippi College, and 2003 summer missionary to Toronto. "I went with excitement and a vision of how I was going to help them. It didn't take long for God to set me back and change my perspective."

Gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering and Cooperative Program dollars available through the Missions Mobilization Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board enabled Kelly to spend her summer in Toronto.

Her work focused mainly on Emmanuel Church, a new mission meeting in an Arabic Church building. The mainly Hispanic congregation has an intense desire to reach all people in the community for Christ.

Kelly's time was utilized doing whatever was needed. "Whatever was needed" included holding children's church, helping coordinate prayer walks,

assisting the Arabic church with Sunday School, helping new immigrants set up households, encouraging women in abuse shelters, and spending an entire Saturday playing with a group of children so that their parents could plan activities for the new church year.

Though she was able to minister in a variety of ways, Kelly feels this trip was about much more than what she could do for the people of Emmanuel Church.

One day she overheard her supervisor, Maria Diaz, commenting that Kelly had come to Canada to learn. That really stuck

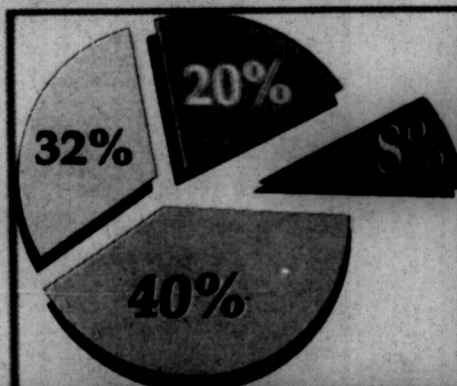
with her. She felt she was there to do a work for God, not learn, but God's perspective was different. Looking back she can now see how much God taught her.

"God dealt with me about feeling that salvation somehow depends on me (but) what God desires is a relationship," she says. Missions and witnessing aren't about 'doing' things. It is about allowing my relationship with God to permeate everything I do."

Allowing their relationship with God to permeate everything they did is what Kelly saw in the members of Emmanuel

Church. She says, "Their passion grabbed me. They weren't passionate just on Sundays, but every day, all week, with everyone they met. Every outing was an opportunity to share Christ."

Kelly has returned home to Vaiden. Reflecting on her time in Canada Kelly says, "Some mission trips are meant for 'doing' and some are to allow God to reveal Himself to us. That's what this trip was for me. Pastor Cesar Parra (of Emmanuel Church) told me that missions is not a schedule — it is a way of life. That is what I hope to make of my life."



JUST FOR THE RECORD



Member of Mt. Olive Church, Baldwyn

Members of Mt. Olive Church, Baldwyn, went to Williamsburg, Ky., June 21-28 on a mission trip. Of the 23 making the trip, 14 did VBS with Appalachian Ministries and 9 did construction with

Missions Outreach of Cumberland College.

The GAs of Immanuel Church, Vicksburg, celebrated Independence Day with a Pizza Party. They collected and sent

needed items to our soliders in Iraq. Pictured are the GAs. Cathy Gordon is their leader and Billy Brumfield is pastor.

Cleary Church, Florence, will hold a flea market and chil-

dren's clothing and household item rummage sale on September 6. Booth space is available for rent to any interested vendors. For more information, call (601) 845-3086.

New Life Gospel Quartet will be in concert on August 31 at 1:15 p.m. at Concord Church, Pelahatchie. A love offering will be received.

Antioch Church, Greene, recently held their annual Prayer Walk for schools. One hundred and eighteen people walked and prayed over 310 miles representing 21 different churches of all denominations.

Branch Church, Morton, held VBS June 9-13. The average attendance was 78. Julie Mahaffey was the VBS director and Michael Giles is pastor.



GAs of Immanuel Church, Vicksburg



VBS Participants of Branch Church, Morton

HOMECOMINGS & REVIVALS

Monument Drive, Tupelo: Oct. 5; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; lunch will follow; Kent Grice, former pastor, preaching.

New Providence, Carthage: Sept. 21; registration, 9:45 a.m.; pavilion dedication and worship, 10 a.m.; cemetery meeting, 11:30 a.m.; lunch will be served at noon; Ric White, preaching; Janice King and

Pam Hopkins, music; Smith Sanders, pastor.

Calvary, Louin: Sept. 7-10; 10 a.m., 11 a.m., lunch and afternoon services will follow; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Hueston Adkins, preaching; Juanita West, music; Jeff Hardy, piano; William Spencer, pastor.

Calvary, West Point: Sept. 7; 50th anniversary; Sunday School,

9 a.m.; worship, 10 a.m.; a covered dish lunch will follow; James S. Young and Barry Bouchillon, music; James M. Towery, pastor; for more information, call (662) 494-4421.

First, Coffeeville: Sept. 8, 15, 22, and 29; 7 p.m., nightly; Sept. 8, James Lewis, Carriage Hills, Southaven, preaching; Sept. 15, Jim Futral, MBCB, preaching; Sept. 22, Randy Bain, First,

Water Valley, preaching; Sept. 29, Ken Hester, First, Pontotoc, preaching; Daniel Hathorne, pastor.

Moak's Creek, Summit: Sept. 7; lunch will follow morning worship; afternoon worship, 1:30 p.m.; Millard Purl, speaking; Crownsmen, music; Carl Estes, pastor; Dorothy Moak, music director.

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For Additional Information Contact:

Frank Bishop

(800) 890-3249

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1430 Lelia Drive
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Remember September is Foundation Month

Generally viewed as "the cornerstone of estate planning," research has repeatedly shown that as many as 8 out of 10 Christians do not have a valid Last Will and Testament. This oversight by Christian people has too often resulted in a form of stewardship glaucoma, gradually robbing these faithful stewards of their lifelong vision of support and forcing them to leave both their loved ones and their favorite charity in the dark regarding the distribution of their hard-earned estate assets.

Since 1943, the Mississippi Baptist Foundation has enabled individuals to acquire 20/20 vision in the highly specialized area of charitable estate planning. Your stewardship vision, perhaps your greatest gift, deserves no less. If you want to see your charitable estate planning goals realized, give the Foundation a call. And if you would like to order Estate Planning bulletin inserts for your church, call (601) 292-3210.



THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST FOUNDATION

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Walker Music evangelist **Steve Walker**, Pinola, will be in concert August 31 at 6 p.m. at Pleasant Valley Church, Mendenhall. Admission is free. A love offering will be received. Earl Clark is pastor. For more information, call (601) 847-4108, (601) 847-4375 or visit www.stevewalker.org.

and Toxie Holmes were the best costume winners.

Friendship Church, Sturgis, recently held a dedication for a new educational wing and Family Life Center. The youngest church member, Lane McClendon, and the oldest member, Delia Speir, were honored on this occasion.



Mt. Pisgah Church VBS Participants, Carrollton

overall average attendance was 131, and including the youth group was 144. Pictured (from left) are Sallis Church, Linda Hutchison, Chrystelle Thames, Ann Godfrey, and Dan West, pastor of McAdams Church.



39ers of Calvary Church, Pascagoula

Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth, will host The Hoppers in a gospel music concert on September 7 at 7 p.m. A love offering will be taken.

The 7th, 8th, and 9th grade

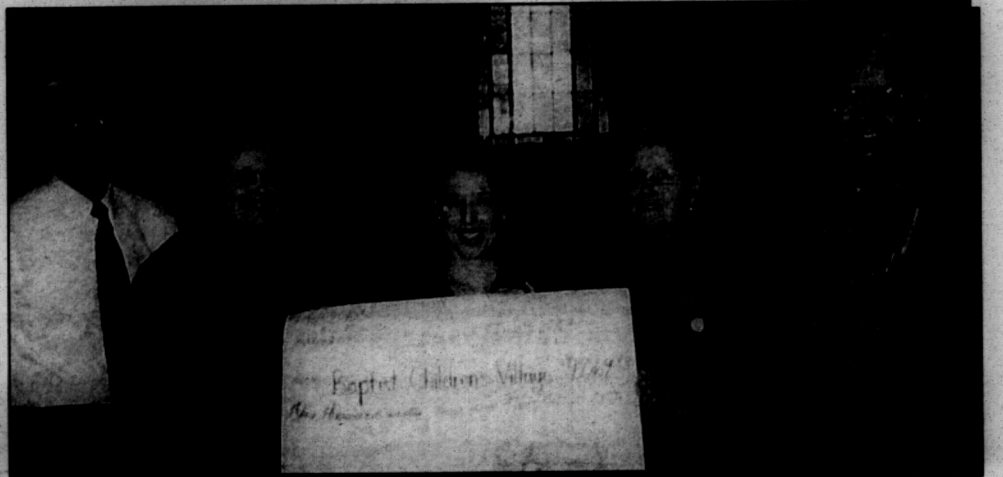
Acteens of First Church, Columbus, attended the National Acteens Convention in Nashville, Tenn., July 29-August 1. Pictured are the Acteens.

Mt. Pisgah Church, Carrollton, recently held VBS. Pictured are the participants.

McAdams Church, Sallis, and Sallis Church,

cosponsored an area VBS June 2-6 at Sallis Church. Commencement was held June 8 at 6 p.m. A missions offering of \$1,069 was raised for the Baptist Children's Village as well as a collection of Campbell's food labels to help contribute along with other groups for a new

van at the Village. VBS had an average attendance of 88 children and 42 workers. The



Wicker, Hutchison, Thames, Godfrey, & West



Acteens of First Church Columbus, Columbus

The 1920s-1940s was the theme for the June meeting of the 39ers of Calvary Church, Pascagoula. Louise Thomas



39ers of Calvary Church, Pascagoula



Lane McClendon and Delia Speir

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NAMES IN THE NEWS

Northcrest Church, Meridian, ordained **Michael Gibson** to preach on January 5. Gibson has answered the call to pastor at Liberty Church, Toombs. Pictured (from left) are his wife Josie, Gibson, and Malcolm Lewis, pastor.

Utica Church, Utica, licensed **James Adair** to preach on August 10. Pictured (from left) are Adair and Ben James, pastor.

Tangipahoa Church, Summit, licensed **Preston Gordon** to the ministry on August 3. Pictured (from left) are his wife Kim, daughter Macy, son Gage, Preston, and Troy Mercer, pastor.

First Church, Terry, recently ordained **Bo Baughn** and **Terry**

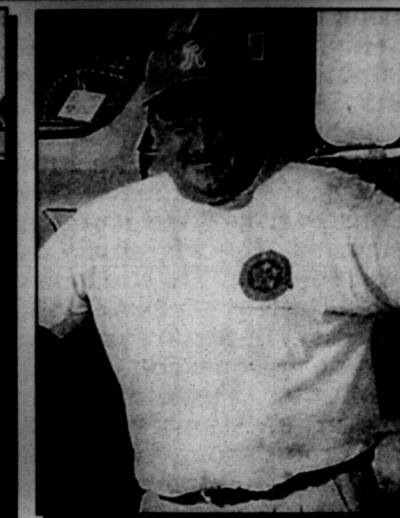


Building Volunteers of First Church & Looxahoma Churches, Coldwater

Hodges as deacons. Pictured (from left) are Baughn, John Pace, pastor, and Hodges.

Calvary Chapel, Parchman, began construction in July of the **W. D. and Earline Kirk Family**

Life Center. A team of volunteers from **First Church, Coldwater**, and **Looxahoma Church, Coldwater**, assisted the Calvary men in pouring the slab. **Steve Lloyd**, pastor of **New Augusta Church** led con-



Steve Lloyd

struction of the frame in August. Pictured are the Coldwater volunteers and Lloyd. The men of Calvary have traveled to 2 states and 7 countries building churches and other Baptist facilities as well.



The Prestons and Troy Mercer, pastor



The Gibsons and Malcolm Lewis, pastor



Baughn, Pace, pastor, and Hodges



James Adair and Ben James, pastor

DURANT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking a part-time minister of music. Sunday a.m. and p.m. services, Wednesday night services. Also, lead an adult choir. Please contact (662) 653-3105 or fax resume (662) 653-6147.

NORTHWEST BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IN DeSoto and Tate counties is now taking applications and resumes for Association Missions Director. Send all information, including accurate references to Mr. Dan Freeman, 2604 Lavern Road, Nesbit, MS 38651.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF WEST POINT, Miss., is currently accepting resumes for the position of a full-time Early Childhood Ministry Director (child care & Kindergarten). Please send resumes to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 794, West Point, MS 39773, attn. cc chairman, Sherman Berry or call (662) 494-4213.

RAYMOND ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH IN Jackson is prayerfully seeking individuals for positions as full-time minister of music and part-time minister to children. Please send resume to Raymond Road Baptist Church, personnel committee, 4622 Raymond Road, Jackson, MS 39212. Rev. Tommy Anthony is pastor.

EXPERIENCED SBC BIVOCATIONAL pastor available. Prefer church within 100 mile radius of Gulfport. Send resume request to P.O. Box 5881, Vancleave, MS 39565.

CHILDREN-YOUTH MINISTRY Secretary needed. Send resume to Country Woods Baptist Church, 6737 Siwell Road, Byram, Miss. 39272-8700.

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, Greenville, Miss. is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resume to Calvary Baptist

Church, P.O. Box 4864, Greenville, MS 38704, (662) 334-4554.

ORGANIST, CASTLE WOODS Baptist Church. Send a letter of interest or resume to 175 Stonecastle Drive, Brandon, MS 39047, via email or fax. Fax number (601) 992-2623. For information call (601) 992-9977.

FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH, JACKSON, is looking for a part-time Associate Minister to help meet the needs of this caring church with outreach programs and homebound ministry. For more information, contact Dr. Greg Wolfe, pastor, P.O. Box 13675, Jackson, MS 39236. Phone (601) 368-2983.

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH IN Meridian is looking for an organist. Interested persons should contact Dr. Chisholm by phone at (601) 693-4288 or email danny@cbcmdn.org.

STAFF CHANGES

First Church, Marks, has called **A. Hilton Lane** as interim pastor. This is the third time Lane has served Marks in this capacity. He pastored churches in Arkansas and served as chaplain with Baptist Memorial Health Care Systems prior to retirement.



Bass

First Church, Delisle, has called **B. B. Bass** as pastor. Bass has been serving as interim pastor.

Mashulaville Church, Noxubee, called **Joshua Allen Jacob** as pastor effective August 3. Jerry F. Zgarba recently completed the interim pastorate.

First Church, Sartartia, has called **Bobby Anderson** as pastor.

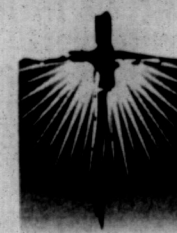
Anderson is a former pastor of Eagle Lake Church, Vicksburg.



Anderson

Calvary Church, Yazoo City, recently called **Gene Fant**, Clinton, as interim pastor.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

ARM'S LENGTH

Editor:

I read with great amusement the letter from Vaughn Denton (August 7 issue) concerning the "Big Darling Boys" and the recent nominations. Vaughn in his outrage implies a lot more than what he wrote.

When the 1979 Conservative Resurgence occurred, the big topic and question was: "Do you believe the Bible is the inerrant Word of God?" In this bleak period of time this question (which is similar to the old divorce lawyer question: When did you stop beating your wife?) was used to dismantle a great seminary system and destroy the careers of Godly ministers who with knowledge answered the question with: "Yes, but..." instead of the then politically correct answer of "Yes." Pastors like Vaughn were conned into believing they were accomplishing some great work of God.

When a criminal cons you and gets your money, they must either flee with the loot or keep the con going. Men like Vaughn must now be kept at arm's length and powerless lest they wake up and cause real trouble for the leaders behind the divisive fundamentalist movement in our denomination. It's time to send the followers of Jack Hyles, John Rice, Curtis Hudson, Bob Jones and the rest back to their non-denominations and let us lead folks to Jesus, like we did in the thousands before the Conservative Resurgence ended our witness.

I urge those with ears to hear, let them hear. Those with courage, let them act.

Ed Williamson
Canon City, Co.

SUPPORT BSU

Editor:

I really enjoy reading the Baptist Record each week. I must say that Jim Futral's column entitled, BSU Blessings (July 24 issue), was great and very timely. As school is just around the corner and many students will be away from home and the family for the first time, our Baptist Student Union (BSU) centers will hopefully be buzzing. I appreciate so much Mississippi Baptists providing the BSU Centers and directors on the college campuses; however, funding needs to be addressed. The additional needs include water, gas, electricity, telephones, office supplies, paper products, lawn care, pest control (and the list goes on).

I feel that the directors should be busy sharing the Good News rather than having to take time away from the students to be out visiting and soliciting funds from the churches in their areas for day-to-day essentials.

Having been employed on one of the campuses, I have seen many students at the BSU first hand and I realize the importance and privilege of having a place for students to gather and share. I would like to take this opportunity, as a member of the Advisory Board at Hinds Community College BSU, to ask the churches in the Rankin, Hinds, Madison, and Warren counties to consider supporting the BSU monthly as you prepare your budgets for 2004. At present only seven churches in this four-county area are monthly contributors. We should hang our head in shame!

I feel that student ministry is vital in our colleges today. You will never know the difference it could make in some college student's life. No matter where you live in Mississippi, there is a BSU Center nearby. Drop in and see for yourself what goes on. By supporting the BSU Centers, you will be really blessed.

Joyce Newton
Raymond

MOTIVES NOT KNOWN

Editor:

The lead letter to the editor (Distortion of Truth, July 31 issue) caused me some discomfort. The writer gave "loud Amens" to the editor's questioning of the motives of Jerry Rankin and the International Mission Board trustees. Can we know someone's motives? Can we know the heart's intent? Judging motives is always dangerous. Our Lord Jesus implied that we may well be condemned for that we condemn in others (Matt. 7:2).

We never know another's motives so it is likely that we ascribe to others the things that are in our own hearts. We assume that others are driven by the feelings that drive us. The op-ed pages of the secular press speculate with judgements as to the motives of those with whom they disagree. The "spin" is fundamentally dishonest and distorting. Christ calls us to a much higher ethic.

We may not concur with others' actions nor agree with their stated beliefs but we do not know their inner heart or motives. God would be pleased if we used great caution in judging why people do what they do. We may know the "what" but not the "why."

Tom Atwood, pastor
First Church
Oxford

PROTECT CHILDREN

Editor:

I'm responding to your editorial about Britney Spears (July 17 issue). I am the parent of twin daughters who will be 11 years old at the end of August. I also have a 14-

year old son. I can assure you that my daughters could not pick Britney Spears out of a line-up if you paid them. Why? Because they've never seen her on television, in a magazine, or any other media form. They're never heard any of her songs so of course they have no way of knowing any lyrics by heart. In short, not every 11-year old girl in America adores (or even knows) Britney Spears, as your article states.

My situation may be a little different from yours in that my children are home schooled. I'm assuming your 11-year old daughter attends a public or private school, but the fact remains that you should have the final say-so in protecting your daughter — and yes, I firmly believe little girls should be protected from people like Spears.

Please don't think I'm a prude who overshelters my children. The point is this: protect and shelter that sweet little daughter of yours for as long as you can. The trash of the world will filter in soon enough without your help. Keep raising her to be the most Christ-like person possible.

Keep up the good work at The Baptist Record and keep turning out those thought-provoking articles!

Kim Potter
Flora

DIFFICULT JOB

Editor:

Thank you for your open letter to Britney Spears (July 17 issue). I have two teen granddaughters who look to Britney as a role model. First it was the indecent dress code revealing the breast, midriff, and below. Now the premarital sex. This is bedroom talk and should never be released to the public.

Yes, this does make our job as Christian parents and grandparents difficult in teaching moral character.

Glennie Speed
Jackson

THANKS FOR START

Editor:

Thank you for our Baptist newspaper. I look forward to receiving each weekly issue and usually read the paper through upon its arrival.

In the October 31, 2002, issue the editorial, You go, girl!, set off a chain of events I would like you to know. After reading about the stand (Miss America) Erika Harold had taken concerning sexual abstinence, I asked the board of Sav-A-Life of Cleveland to allow me to contact the Miss America organization about the possibility of Miss America speaking to the high school students in Cleveland. Imagine my surprise, and the surprise to some board members, when the organization

called in late June and told us Harold had the dates of August 19-20 open. They were happy to accommodate our request and allowed a special student fee which was considerably less than the usual appearance fee.

We were able to convince other organizations to join us in sponsoring this two-day event, Fight for Your Future, (during which) Miss America 2003 Erika Harold spoke to high school students at Mississippi Delta Junior College in Moorhead and Delta State University in Cleveland.

Thank you for reporting on current issues that should be of concern to all Christians. Your insight as to the impact of such issues on our lives is reliable and welcomed by your readers. We appreciate you and the ministry in which you are engaged. Thank you especially for the Miss America article. Thank you for getting all this started!

Linda J. Russell, coordinator
Sav-A-Life of Cleveland
Cleveland

CHILDREN'S CARE

Editor:

Sadness befell me when I read of the resignations of Ronnie Robinson and Henry Glaze of the Baptist Children's Village (Robinson, Glaze resign Children's Village posts, July 10 issue). The dedicated ministry of these men gave to the special needs of children is to be commended.

Most Mississippi Baptists don't know the specifics of the board's decision to make a change in leadership. As an alumnus of the Village, I feel boardroom politics and haste were the reasons. Through the years I've learned big decisions require much thought and prayer. The pros and cons to every side and both sides must be heard in decision-making. Were Robinson and Glaze afforded the opportunity of discussion and prayer before the final decision was made? Why the haste?

The mission at the Village has been that no child be turned away. With approximately 400 children, the annual budget is over five million dollars. Robinson was making budget cuts with board approval. With this change in leadership and budget cuts, I pray the trustees carefully weight future decisions and improve on past mistakes. We have lost two outstanding Christian men! We teach our children to admit they are wrong when they make mistakes. Isn't this the Christian way?

Prayer is needed for the search committee and the trustees as they seek new leadership. Let's prioritize our support and giving because the Bible teaches us to care for our own. Those children are ours to care for, nurture, and guide.

Hilda Peeler
Meadville

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

God wants me to be loving

1 Samuel 18:1-19:7

By Karen Hollowell

This week we conclude the book of Genesis and the account of the life of Joseph. This week's lesson focuses on forgiveness. This is not an easy concept, and I must admit that it is an area of my life with which I still struggle. It goes against our human nature to be able to forgive those who've wronged us. Perhaps that's why much of the Bible's teachings are concerned with this very thing. Jesus himself spent much time teaching the necessity of forgiveness to His disciples and the crowds who gathered to hear him. Forgiveness for those who crucified Him was the last thing Jesus requested of God before He died.

Why is forgiveness so hard?

Pride and wounded egos are often the reason. We think that forgiving will mean that the person who did something to us is "getting away with it." Our sense of justice and fair play often prevents us from getting past this way of thinking. This is something I've struggled with. Who of us has not had our feelings hurt, had hateful things said about us and to us? Many times we do have a right to be angry, but we don't have the right to stand in the place of God as Joseph said when addressing this issue with his brothers. After Jacob died, they all assumed that Joseph would now retaliate for the way they had treated him so many years before. Joseph had already assured

Hollowell

them, but did so again here in ch. 50. He could have had his revenge, but he saw a greater purpose in why he had suffered so much. He knew something that we need to learn today—forgiveness is not a declaration that the person who offended you was right to do it; it's about releasing ourselves from lives of bitterness and hatred.

There is very little joy in the life of an unforgiving person. Many Christians today are not able to live truly blessed lives because they can't get past something that was done to them ten, twenty, or thirty years ago. People who have God-given gifts aren't using them because somebody offended them, and they refuse to do anymore. This is not to say that the reasons are not valid. We are often accused unjustly, talked about falsely, or treated badly. The effect this has on

us does not have to be negative, if we, like Joseph can see that God is in control. In Gen. 50:20, Joseph says, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives".

Reconciliation was one blessing enjoyed by Joseph and his family. His brothers acknowledged their guilt. Joseph saw evidence of their changed hearts when they first came to Egypt to buy grain. Unfortunately, restoration does not always happen. Families or friends become estranged and are not reconciled, but forgiveness is not dependent upon reconciliation. Forgiveness can and needs to occur in our hearts, regardless of the outcome of the relationship.

The story of Joseph is often compared with that of Jesus. Although there are no comparisons as regards to divinity, there are similarities with their earthly lives.

Both were hated by their

brothers. Both were made to suffer much pain, but God was always with them through every circumstance. They both freely offered forgiveness to those who had wronged them. Most importantly, God used them to fulfill promises and confirm the covenant that He made with Abraham. Through Joseph God saved an entire nation from a famine. Through Jesus, God made possible the way to save every man from spiritual death. Forgiveness-giving and accepting it may not be easy, but it is a fruit that shows the Spirit indwelling in us, enabling us to be used of God in mighty and unimaginable ways as Joseph was. Psalms 86:5 says that God is "well-known as good and forgiving" (The Message translation). As His children, shouldn't we strive to emulate our Father and extend just a portion of the mercy He has given to us?

Hollowell is member of Crosby Church, Crosby.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Living in the Church Family

James 5:1-20

By Kiely Young

A normally sweet and smiling senior saint was sitting on her front porch with a long face looking like she had just lost her best friend in life. Her pastor happened to come by for a visit and noticed this down-trodden outlook and asked what was wrong. She said, "Pastor I am tribulating, just like Jesus said. He said, 'In this world you will have tribulation.' So I am tribulating." Life seems like that some days. As some look down the road and say "If it were not for bad luck, I would have no luck at all."

James tells us in this closing chapter we need to hang in there. We do have a solution. His name is Jesus.

BE PATIENT (5:7-12).

Remember the farmer. He

plants the seed, but he doesn't go out the next day and dig it up to see how it is growing. He knows all the conditions have to be right to produce a good crop. He doesn't just sit idly by and do nothing either. He cultivates the soil, and works with the provisions of rain and sunshine that God provides. He knows in time a rich harvest will be provided.

James exhorts us to be faithful in the work of the Lord until the coming of the Lord. We may be called upon to suffer in the process. Things may not go according to our plans. Conditions may get unpleasant in fact. James says remember the prophets. Their life was not exactly a walk in the park. And what about Job? One day a prosperous healthy family and then out of nowhere a calamity



Young

hits. He loses family, his possessions and his health. Who are we to complain about a few bumps in the road?

When crisis does come, what are the promises you try to make to bargain with God for better times? James says look out...those words may come back to haunt you. When we seem to be up against the wall of life we must remember that God knows when and where trials come. He knows just how much you can endure and He promises to be there at all times.

BE PRAYERFUL (5:13-18).

James reminds us "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." E. M. Bounds, great prayer warrior of the past century, said, "There is little you can do until you have prayed, but so much that can be accomplished after you have prayed." James tells us in these few verses it is time to get serious and claim the promises of

God for answered prayer. Remember his words earlier, "You have not because you do not ask" (4:2). God does want us to ask, but He wants the asking to be based on our relationship with Him, an abiding relationship. John tells us "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:7). This does not make God a celestial bellhop. This promise is for those who have the relationship that knows Him as "Abba, Father." In the south we would say "Daddy." It is a mutual relationship based upon love and trust.

BE PURPOSEFUL (5:19-20).

We are on a journey as believers. We need the church and the church needs us. We must be intentional along the way. We need to be accountable to each other. We are in the process of becoming Christ-like. The last thing we need is a "friend" who heaps criticism upon us when we already know we have

done wrong. What we need is a friend who lovingly reaches out to us with a hand up to pull us out of the ditch and help us walk in the right direction. That friend "turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins" (v.20).

My middle brother died at the age of 37 as an alcoholic. A lot of people looked down upon him telling him he was wasting his life, and so he was. A coworker, a true friend, visited him while my brother was in the hospital and told him that God still loved him and had a plan for his life. That friend led my brother to faith in Christ. That friend was intentional with his love. So must we be. It has been said by some looking in on us, "The church is the only group I know that buries its wounded." Ouch! Let's be patient, prayerful and purposeful.

Young is the director of the Sunday School Dept. at the MBCB in Jackson.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in congregations of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly typed on standard form provided by the newspaper. All articles must be submitted in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News items may be submitted electronically to the editor, who will be glad to accept them. Please include a correct person's name and phone number.



Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via e-mail, or by hard-copy on a floppy disk, or to C.O. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lit.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 352-1000. E-mail: baptistrecord@msbaptist.org

New Passion movie stirs plaudits, criticism

DALLAS (BP and local reports) — Mel Gibson's representation of the sufferings of Jesus Christ in the upcoming movie, *The Passion*, surpasses all earlier efforts by cinematographers, according to Southern Baptists who were invited to

Hearon, executive director of Dallas Association in Dallas, Texas. Referring to the film's depiction of how the crucifixion occurred, he added, "I didn't see anything I've not read in Scripture, but I saw it in a more graphic way because it was portrayed before our very eyes. You see the flesh and blood flying as a result of the scourge. It's very true to life."

Southern Baptist Convention President Jack Graham, pastor of the Dallas-area Prestonwood Church, said, "The movie is biblical, powerful and potentially life-changing." He predicted millions of people would see *The Passion* when it opens on Ash Wednesday next spring.

"The thing that I'm most excited about," Graham said, "is the opportunity it's going to give those of us who preach the cross to explain the meaning of the cross and message of the cross to untold millions of people who are going to be asking questions about the cross and why Jesus died."

Graham said he was particularly impressed with the quality of the film, the accuracy of content and overall emotional impact. "There's no question it is the most hard-hitting display and demonstration of the crucifixion."

Richards also spoke of the scourging and crucifixion as graphic in detail, adding, "I have preached the cross for 33 years. The movie is everything I could ever convey with words and more." He spoke of being deeply moved by the scenes of the physical, emotional and spiritual sufferings of Jesus Christ.

"Graphic is the most accurate word to express what we saw," stated Janet Denison of Dallas whose husband Jim pastors Park Cities Church. She expects the final version will be even more graphic since the sound has not been fully mixed. "I would not use the word entertaining with this movie at all. It was very difficult. At one point I wanted it to be over," she said.

Graham said parents would have to make a decision as to whether their children are mature enough to handle the film. "It is extremely violent because the cross was violent," he stated. While many Christians do not see R-rated movies of any kind, he believes the exceptional quality of *The Passion* makes the movie an exception to that rule.

Richards agreed that many scenes make the movie inappropriate for young children, adding that entertainment in general and movies in particular have been a challenge for him in recent years. "Attending movies has almost become a

forbidden fruit," he reflected. "Where can you go without seeing salacious sex or hearing blue streak obscenities?"

To critics who claim the film is anti-Semitic, he responded, "They should consider that many who embrace *The Passion* worship a God who came in the form of a Jewish man."

Hearon disagreed with an Anti-Defamation League spokesman who objected to the movie's portrayal of Jews as being responsible for the crucifixion. "All you have to do is read the Gospels. The Romans crucified Jesus, but the Jewish leadership delivered him up to be crucified. The Gospel is clear in that."

During the question-and-answer session, one member of the audience questioned whether the film would be a commercial success. Richards recalled Gibson's assertion that he didn't care whether he made money on the film, reiterating his desire to bring glory to God.

Graham added, "Mr. Gibson's sole intent really is to share simply, but profoundly, his faith, and not only his faith, but the faith of millions of Christians who believe in Christ. I was comfortable with his desire and motivation to get this message out."

During his lengthy career as an actor, Gibson has used profane language, consumed alcohol, appeared nude, and participated in sexually-explicit scenes in several of his movies. No mention was reported of anyone questioning Gibson during the screening about that part of his lifestyle.



TOWARD CRUCIFIXION — Mel Gibson (right) directs a scene from *The Passion*, which has stirred passions of Christians for its biblical, powerful recounting of Jesus' crucifixion and of critics who allege the upcoming film is anti-Semitic. (BP photo)

view a rough cut of the film in Dallas. Critics who view the film as anti-Semitic beg to differ. "For the next two hours plus, I sat with a knot in my stomach and a lump in my throat," stated Jim Richards, executive director of Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.

"It is certainly the most graphic and dramatic portrayal I've ever seen," said another guest at the screening, Gary

said, "is the opportunity it's going to give those of us who preach the cross to explain the meaning of the cross and message of the cross to untold millions of people who are going to be asking questions about the cross and why Jesus died."

'Strong anti-Jewish potential' alleged in movie

DALLAS (BP)—As Mel Gibson's movie *The Passion* entered the editing stage, an ad hoc panel of critics judged that an early script contained "strong anti-Jewish potential," in the words of a Vanderbilt University professor. They feared it would portray Jews as "blood-thirsty, sadistic and money-hungry enemies of Jesus"; that it exploited New Testament passages to selectively weave a narrative hostile to Jews while doing injustice to the Gospels; and that it would include non-scriptural elements to form "an inescapably negative picture of Jewish society and leadership" as well as portraying "Jews and the temple as the focus of evil."

Described as the Ad Hoc Scholars Committee, reviewers included professors from Union Theological Seminary, Hebrew Union College, Boston College, Boston University, Seton Hall University, Vanderbilt University and Catholic Theological Union. The panel described itself as having been convened by the Anti-Defamation League and a committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Vanderbilt University Divinity School New Testament studies professor Amy-Jill Levine said the committee looked for biblical fidelity, historical accuracy and the avoidance of anti-Semitism. In a column for *Beliefnet*, she questioned Gibson's insistence that the movie has no anti-Jewish material. Accusing him of being "quite selective in choosing audiences" to preview the film, Levine imagined how children of those invited would characterize Jews if asked, "In the movie, who killed Jesus?" or "Did the Jews in the film seem very interested in money?"

Levine added, "Every single response may be benign, but why take the chance?" She argued that a film aspiring to promote Christian faith can easily promote anti-Judaism, particularly among audiences with culturally ingrained anti-Jewish views, such as Orthodox Christians in Eastern Europe or Muslims in Syria.

Another member of the panel, a Union Theological

Seminary professor, Sister Mary C. Boys, said the panel of Jewish and Catholic scholars concluded that the film could readily promote anti-Semitism, according to

an interview reported in *The Houston Chronicle*.

"We're not saying Mel Gibson is an anti-Semite, or even that the film is anti-Semitic," Boys said, "but rather, that by stressing the brutality, the torture, and by ascribing that visually to the Jews, the Christians seeing this will naturally conclude that the Jews carry the primary responsibility for the death of Jesus."

Critics in various quarters are using the term "deicide."

Marketing director Paul Lauer responded that the committee's comments are inconsistent with the final version of the film. Eventually, the Catholic bishops apologized for what they described as an unauthorized critique.

Critics from the Jewish Anti-Defamation League (ADL), however, stood their ground in saying that without scholarly and theological understanding, productions such as *The Passion* could falsify history and fuel the animus of those who hate Jews.



PASSION SCENE — The scene of Jesus carrying His cross to Calvary in Mel Gibson's upcoming movie, *The Passion*, is among those that make critics of the film skittish about a perception of anti-Semitism. (BP photo)

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HKJ GFBKC UHJF

MFAOFZE, QF GFZHUF

EQF HDEQPA PO

FEFAKHW RHWLHEBPK

DKEP HWW EQFU EQHE

PGFN QBU;

QFGAFSR OBLF: KBKF

Clue: O = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke 8:40